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EDU 720  
9/26/12

Apple App Review  
"Story Kit"

**Overview:**

App Title: Story Kit  
App Publisher/Developer: Ben Bederson/ ICDL Foundation  
Version: 1.1  
Link to App Store: App Store > Education > ICDL Foundation  
<http://en.childrenslibrary.org>

**Curriculum Compliance:**

This app is a fantastic tool for the curriculum framework. The app allows teachers to work with students across all grade levels and reading/writing levels. There is an abundance of ways in which to utilize this app so that it accommodates everyone in many different standards.

**Operational:**

**(1, "Not at first"/2, "No")** The navigation is not very easy at first, but after playing with the app for a few minutes it becomes much easier to use. There is no set of directions or a tutorial that comes with the app. It would be a great help to those who are unfamiliar with how apps like this work to have a set of instructions that would lead (especially children) users on how to manipulate the app appropriately.

**(3, "Yes")** There is the option to use across many ability levels. For instance, Kindergarteners could tell the story to the teacher as she/he wrote the story for them in their app book. There is even an option for the students to record their voice on the app so that when they listen to it later, they will hear themselves

“reading” the story. Older students can write their own stories and play with how they would like their story to look and sound.

**(4, “Yes”)** The app comes with the autocorrect feature for students who need a little help with their spelling. Like most autocorrect tools, this one does not recognize certain phrases or the names of places, especially made-up ones.

**(5, “Yes”)** The Audio/Vision aspects of this app are what makes it so impressive. The app allows students to draw their own pictures for their story and paste them along with the words on the page. If the children do not want to draw, the app lets students take pictures of the world around them, or themselves, and paste them onto the pages of their story.

**(6, “Yes”)** When it comes to pasting, copied, tagged, and printed, the app is somewhat limited here. While one cannot print directly from the app, there is the option to share ones work onto the app’s server, which then emails the user a link to a website where they can they tag, share to Facebook, and print out their story for others to see.

**(7, “Yes”)** The user’s work is kept on the app for as long as the user chooses to keep it. The app saves the user’s work so that users can put the work down if they encounter a time crunch or even if they experience a bout of writer’s block.

**(8, “Yes”)** The audio/visual aspects of the app address the needs of special education and ESL students. For those who would like to write a story using only spoken words, the app will record the user’s voice for each page and then if the

student chooses, he/she may draw pictures or take pictures to fill in the visual aspects of the story.

**(9, "No")** There are no support materials available on the app for teachers. This app is meant to be open for all different types of people and in the description it even mentions that this app is meant to be played with for fun. The educational side of the app is apparent but it is not the main focus of the app.

#### **Pedagogy:**

**(1, "Yes")** The app accommodates diverse ways in which students learn. This comes down to how the teacher chooses to use the app. For instance, if a student likes to draw their pictures first, and then write in their story, the app makes this option available. If a student is at a lower level and would like to tell their story orally, the app allows the student to record their voice and then write in their story later or have the teacher write in the words for them. Many students may learn to read easier when the stories they have are in their own words.

**(2, "Yes")** As said in the section above, the app covers many development levels. The author can write stories that range anywhere from five pages to thirty pages. There is no requirement on how detailed the story has to be or how much development needs to occur.

**(3, 4, 5, 6, 7, "Yes")** There is a great deal of room for developmental learning and increased understanding when it comes to reading, writing, and phonics. When students begin using the program to write their own stories, they may begin with

smaller and less advanced words and themes. As they progress, the stories can begin to be more advanced in spelling, grammar, and themes.

The engagement in this app is apparent in the amount of originality that the students can expect to experience. The app is all about making your own story with your own characters. Children enjoy creating their own worlds and this program allows them to do so. For example, students can take pictures of their pets and write a story about how when their dog dreams, he is actually a super hero that fights against a crime organization run by cats. These stories can be shared with their parents, teachers, and friends by passing the link that the app gives them to their online story.

**(8, 9, “Yes”)** There is the option to use this app in areas other than English/language Arts as well. It has been found out that children experience problem solving with greater interest when the problems relate to personal experiences and relatable information. This app would allow for teachers to write up stories that deal with mathematics, science, and art.

After students write their stories, they can share their link with the teacher so that their work can be examined and feedback given. There is no function for writing appropriate editing functions, but the work can be printed if the teacher feels the need to write on the students' stories.

The “Story Kit” app is appropriate for all age levels. The versatility of the app allows for a great deal of customization in working this app into lesson plans. Students who are not yet comfortable with writing may record their voice and have the teacher write in the words of the story for them. For later grades and levels, students can write up to a 30+ pages short story with full audio and illustrations.

The best way in which a teacher could incorporate the app into the classroom would be with emergent readers. Research has shown that many students will be able to read at a higher level when the stories that they read are ones that they created on their own. Students could record their voices into the app and create their own illustrations. After this has taken place, the teacher can write down their stories from the audio and incorporate both into the story for the students to read later with their own voices reading along with them.

There is nothing in the app that a teacher, with the right tools, could not do before. What the app does is incorporate many different tools into one convenient place that would allow for better use of them all.

Many learning styles are available for an array of students to use. Again this comes down to how the teacher chooses to use the app. For those who like to write themselves, the app has options for writing, telling your own story orally, or even simply drawing your own pictures that can tell a story on their own.

With regards to making multiple accounts, the app does not require any type of registration to use or a sign-in name. In a classroom where each student has their own iPhone or iPad, the app, which is free, lets each student use their own tool,

which can be accessed by the person using that particular device. Although the apps will not be linked, students can share their work with the teacher and other students by sending them a web address where their story can be found and read.

When students begin using this app, the teacher will need to at least demonstrate how it works and can be manipulated. Since the app does not have a tutorial or a manual, it is the responsibility of the teacher to make sure that the students have a firm grasp on how to use it. Instruction time on this should not take more than five minutes before allowing students to get started. Although, there are many features, the teacher may have to go over with the students more than once for complete comprehension.

This app will be able to be used by all students and not a specific subgroup. While there are possibilities for those with Learning Disabilities and ESL/ELL students, it is not limited to be used by one or the other. Most of this depends on how the teacher/instructor chooses to use the app.

With reinforcement, the app does not give students any form of feedback. With apps that deal with mathematics and problem solving, many times the app will tell the user when they have solved the problem correctly or incorrectly. The feedback will need to be given by the teacher and other students. Students will be able to peer review other stories and given feedback in a safe setting.

#### Evaluation Rubric for iPod Apps

Domain	1	2	3	4
Curriculum	Skill(s)	Skill(s)	Skill(s)	Skill(s)

<b>Connection</b>	reinforced in the app are not clearly connected to the targeted skill or concept	reinforced are prerequisite or foundation skills for the targeted skill or concept	reinforced are related to the targeted skill or concept	reinforced are strongly connected to the targeted skill or concept
<b>Authenticity</b>	Skills are practiced in a rote or isolated fashion	Skills are practiced in a contrived game/simulation format	Some aspects of the app are presented in an authentic learning environment	Targeted skills are practiced in an authentic format/problem-based learning environment
<b>Feedback</b>	Feedback is limited to correctness of student responses	Feedback is limited to correctness of student responses and may allow for students to try again	Feedback is specific and results are improved by student performance	Feedback is specific and results improve student performance; Data is available electronically to student and teacher
<b>Differentiation</b>	App offers no flexibility	App offers limited flexibility	App offers more than one degree of flexibility to adjust settings to meet student needs	App offers complete flexibility to alter setting to meet student needs
<b>User Friendliness</b>	Students need constant teacher supervision in order to use the app	Students need to have the teacher review how to use the app more than one occasion	Students need to have the teacher review how to use the app	Students can launch and navigate within the app independently
<b>Student Motivation</b>	Students avoid the use of the app or complain	Students view the app as "more schoolwork" and may be off-task when directed	Students will use the app as directed by the teacher	Students are highly motivated to use the app and select it as their first choice

Comment [RG1]: For most cases, the skills would be strongly connected except for rhyming and early phonics.

Comment [RG2]: I love the option that allows for students to share their work with specific people. All they need to do is share the link with another person to allow them to read their story.

Comment [RG3]: There are several ways to adjust the app but there are parts in which the app does not help. Such as visually impaired students having to solely listen to their stories.

	when the app is assigned by the teacher	by the teacher to use the app		from a selection of related choices of apps
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**My Scoring of the App:** 21/24

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